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Letters to the editor

A vote for Gina Dawson

When my wife of 18 years, Gina Dawson, expressed interest in running for City Council, I knew immediately her skills and energy were the right match for Lafayette and our growing challenges.

I've enjoyed working with Gina saving 272 oak trees along our parks and trails after co-starting Save Lafayette Trees. From that effort, we established the Lafayette Gas Safety Task Force with the CPUC and PG&E to help identify and improve local gas pipeline safety concerns which would be otherwise unidentified and unaddressed. Lafayette is safer because of her efforts.

Gina is a marvel at spending hours studying detailed issues, understanding laws, building relationships on both sides of an issue, and implementing meaningful action plans. Her success is aided by her kindness to all, a deep sense of fairness, and an unwillingness to accept acts of societal and environmental injustice.

I urge you to vote for Gina and the attributes she'll bring to City Council: openness, honesty, tenacity, creativity, consensus-building, transparency, fairness, and a focus on making Lafayette a diverse and welcoming town for all residents. Please vote for Gina Dawson.

Michael Dawson

co-founder, Save Lafayette Trees

Lafayette Gas Safety Task Force

Renata Sos for Moraga Town Council

I grew up in Moraga, graduated from Campolindo High School, and now live in Moraga with Chuck and our four children.

I live down the street from Renata and her family. She often stops to chat on the sidewalk as we're both walking our dogs. I've gotten to know Renata through those conversations and by observing her and listening to her comments at community events and the Council meetings I have attended.

When dealing with Council issues, I trust Renata to make decisions that are in the best interests of the community. She listens attentively when members of the public speak at council meetings, and actually hears what they have to say. She can put herself in others' shoes and sees things from a range of perspectives. She explains her decisions in ways that not only are authentic and understandable, but make clear that she's given them a lot of thought. That gives me comfort that her decisions are sound, now and in the future.

I believe that Renata is as committed as I am to keeping this a safe and inclusive community and leaving it that way for generations to come. Please vote for Renata on November 3rd.

Chuck and Kim Anderson

Moraga

Do not be fooled by Measure R

Measure R is a road maintenance tax masquerading as a fire prevention tax. The City plan is to ultimately spend 80-90 % of this tax's proceeds for the maintenance of Orinda's roads and storm drains. In the first four (4) years, out of \$10 million in tax revenues, the City plans to only spend \$1.5-3 million on fire prevention. After that, even less!

At this time, in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century, along with the persistent financial disruption, it is not prudent to embark upon a new 20-year, \$60 million tax plan. The existing sales tax is still effective for an additional two (2) years. As some are suggesting, it is NOT expiring immediately. The \$1.2 million per year is twice what the City plans to spend on fire prevention. Additionally, there is another \$2 million available to the City, from other taxes and fees, for critical road and storm drain repairs over the next two years.

Now is not the time to initiate a new 1% sales tax, which will be in effect for 20 years. We need a tax dedicated to fire prevention, which can significantly reduce the fuel load from our hills. A \$150 parcel tax would generate over \$1 million a year; twice what the City was going to spend from the sales tax. Also, the City would legally be required to spend it on fuel reduction.

It is far more judicious to invest in a short-term tax of 3-5 years. At the duration of the tax, we can once again re-evaluate the most crucial needs of the city. Many things change in 20 years, and it is very short sighted to be locked into a long term tax with no flexibility for future needs.

Vote no on Measure R.

Joan Daoro

Orinda

Why I oppose Measure R

I oppose Measure R for many reasons but foremost is my distrust of our city government. I have observed our councils for nearly 30 years. I have the following observations.

- The councils always use "spin" to influence voting. A transparent government should not use marketing techniques. Using our fear of wildfire should not be the means to pass a general tax that will be used predominantly on public storm drains.

- The council does not ask the citizen's preference. Although the polling did consider extending the current « cent tax for only ten years, someone decided to double it to one cent for twenty years with no explanation.
- The council does not hold meetings where dialog is allowed, to hear the citizens desires and explain the issues. Democracy requires all voices to be heard. Instead, the citizens are limited to a 3 minute speech and questions raised are not answered. They thank you and move on.
- There is usually no discussion or objections to flawed or questionable assertions in a staff report. Staff is always commended for their excellent work.
- Even when citizens make reasonable alternative suggestions these are not discussed. They are simply ignored as though never made.

Despite current "assurances" future councils over the next 20 years may choose to spend measure R funds in ways we do not want. Past councils have spent our money on a variety of non-essential expensive projects. Future ones will too, unless we prevent them. The current « cent sales tax does not expire till 2023 and the city could use these funds to provide fuel reduction and necessary infrastructure repairs for the next two years. The reserve fund has \$10 million and has increased by \$1 million for the last four years. I am unwilling to make a twenty year commitment during a pandemic whose economic consequences are not yet known. Had the council proposed shorter taxes that could only be spent for specific purposes I would have supported them. I summarize with "it's the WRONG TAX at the WRONG TIME".

Charles Porges
Orinda

No time for a change in the sales tax

The 20-year Measure R Sales Tax is a "general" tax, meaning allocation of the \$60 million dollars accrued over the next 20 years from this tax will be used at the discretion of the City Council. This is a doubling of the previous general tax, which is still good for two more years - so my first question is, why do we need THIS tax THIS year?

Something about this tax does not smell right to me.

While our Orinda City Council has the possibility of a complete changing of the guard every two years, we in fact have a few entrenched members who have to-date allocated almost no significant funds to fire prevention. This, in spite of a "heads up" from the Oakland fire 29 years ago and of the fact that over a decade ago CalFire designated a major portion of Orinda a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. We are breathing the smoke from fires burning in areas not different from ours.

The obvious (and kindest) answer to "why this year" is that money is needed to initiate fire prevention measures. So why didn't the Council start eight years ago when we voted in a General Sales Tax, or 3 years ago when the Tubbs fire killed 22, or two years ago when the Camp fire killed 86, or at the beginning of the summer when MOFD discontinued the chipper program, using the \$100,000 per month the existing sales tax generates? The City can use this tax for whatever feels most important, such as roads, storm drain maintenance, or fire safety measures. In spite of clear warnings and smoke from fires nearby right now, our City Council has spent virtually none of this tax we all pay for fire safety.

There is no guarantee, no transparency of intent, and especially no history showing us that doubling the sales tax will be spent in any particular area, much less fire safety.

I am voting No on the Measure R Sales Tax this year.

Rose Anne Critchfield
Orinda

Prop 15 is Good for Contra Costa

When people buy a new home, the property is reassessed and the property tax increases. Corporations change ownership all the time, but due to loopholes in the law, their property does not get reassessed. This gives an unfair advantage to older corporations, letting them pay lower taxes now and into the future.

Prop 15 will close the big business property tax loophole and reassess nonresidential properties (worth over \$3 million) on a regular basis. This will increase tax revenue for each local community to help finance our needs such as road and storm drain repairs and emergency services.

Even though the assessed value will go up for older nonresidential properties, the RATE will remain lower than most other states (1% in California, 2.56% in Dallas, 2.57% in Phoenix.)

Protect homeowners and renters while reinvesting in our communities. Vote YES on Prop 15.

www.Yes15.org

Ashley Coates
Moraga

Reelect Jorgens for MOFD

We need Craig Jorgens to remain on the Board of the Moraga Orinda Fire District. Craig understands that MOFD needs to serve the needs of Orinda and Moraga, including emergency medical response, fighting fires, and reducing our exposure to wildfires. Craig has a deep commitment to making our town more resilient to a wildfire. Craig understands the huge potential of new technology and has the right tech skills to understand how high tech can detect a fire and warn us. Craig used similar skills in his previous service on the Orinda Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission, where he identified the potential of a new paving technique - Full Depth Recycling - and led the city to adopt it, achieving both improved durability and reduced costs. Craig also is a businessman who understands the need for clear objectives and financial/managerial reporting to ensure that they are met. On the MOFD Board, he identified major errors in accounting that have now been corrected and has been a force for finding better ways for the District to achieve its goals.

Craig is exactly the representative we need on the MOFD Board Please join me in voting for Jorgens.

Richard Nelson
Orinda

Vote for Anduri

It is with immense gratitude that I again see Carl Anduri's name on our City Council ballot. It is obvious that, unlike most of us ordinary folks, Carl thrives on knotty challenges. His ability to arrive at healing compromise is historic and exactly what Lafayette needs as our community faces a unique era impacting our personal health, economy, and our sense of moral wellbeing.

Mei Sun Li

Former City of Lafayette Senior Services Manager, originator of the Lafayette Spirit Van program, and 44 year resident of Lafayette

Gee for Council

When Darlene Gee called me four years ago to ask if I'd endorse her candidacy for Orinda City Council, my immediate response was "of course." It was such an obvious choice on her part and for the voters. Having known Darlene for over 20 years, I have no hesitation in throwing my full support behind her. Her professional experience as a civil engineer coupled with her civic service on behalf of all Orindans make her the logical choice then and now. Her work on the council these past four years has shown what her friends have known all along. Darlene is a smart, hard-working, and thoughtful decision maker; she does her homework, asks the right questions, and seeks to find common ground, all of which are the very attributes we need in civic leadership today. Please join me in voting to re-elect Darlene Gee to the Orinda City Council.

Pat Rudebusch
Orinda

Measure R: What's the Plan?

The City Council says that because the Measure R Sales Tax is a "general" tax which the City can spend any way it wants to, that it cannot say how it "plans" to spend our \$60 million over the next 20 years. That we have to trust this Council and the next ten generations of councils (changing every two years) to do the right thing.

I believe that accepting this level of trust, at this time, would be misplaced so I am voting NO on Measure R and am asking you to do the same.

The City says it is going to spend the money on a combination of fire prevention, road maintenance and storm drains. But it will not say how much it will spend on each or if it has other funds available to do the job (which it does; over \$3 million per year plus \$10 million in reserves).

One of the reasons it cannot / will not say what it will spend the \$60 million on is that it either has no plan (fire prevention) or incomplete plans (road and storm drain maintenance). What it is asking for is a twenty year blank check so it can develop plans for these tasks.

The City does not need this "new" tax right now in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century along with its unknown economic repercussions. The existing tax, generating \$1.2 million per year for two more years, can be used for anything, including fire prevention. Why is the City Council not spending any of that money on fire prevention now? Why should we believe they will start doing it if we double the tax? Why would they threaten to spend nothing on fire prevention unless we do double the tax to \$2.4 million when they only plan to spend \$500-750,000 on fire prevention?

This is the wrong tax at the wrong time. Let the Council come back when it has a plan and use existing funds until then.

Vote NO on Measure R.

Steve Cohn
Orinda

Yes on Measure R

Orinda, we have just had the driest winter in at least 12 years in Orinda. And it looks like we are facing many more years of hotter and drier weather. We are also witnessing the devastating effects of this on communities across California and the entire West Coast. We need to take action NOW and start to fix a problem that has grown (literally) over the last 50 years in Orinda--too many dangerous trees and shrubs. The Measure R sales tax will begin to make a significant dent in this problem immediately. The first years of the tax will be primarily dedicated to fire fuel reduction, which is our biggest hazard right now. This mitigation work will include All residents (including those who live on private roads). When we've tackled that, the money will be available for maintenance (trees grow back) as well as fixing collapsing storm drains and keeping up road maintenance. Property taxes in Orinda do not provide sufficient funding (due to Prop 13) to do this necessary work. Measure R will ensure that we protect our community. Let's all support Measure R on the November 3rd ballot.

Abe Mintz
Member Orinda Finance Advisory Committee

Vote yes on Measure R

Driving through the streets of Orinda I am always thankful to be in such a beautiful place surrounded by lush trees and rolling hills. We need to protect this great environment by taking responsibility for its

management. Measure R is designed to do just that. It will help reduce the fire risk by providing funds to reduce overgrown vegetation and overhanging branches and trees and will help keep evacuation routes clear. It will allow Orinda to expand the chipper program to help residents clear their lots of brush and overgrown shrubbery. Long term it will also provide money to replace failing storm drains and keep the roads in good condition.

This tax money stays in Orinda and will be used only for Orinda. It will provide much needed support for the current and ongoing maintenance of the city. I urge you to vote yes on Measure R.

Nancy Booth
Orinda

Please join us: Vote Renata Sos for Moraga Town Council

Since Renata and her family inspired us to move Moraga in 2004, we have witnessed the many ways in which she demonstrates her commitment to our community: coaching youth sports, and serving on the Moraga Planning Commission, Community Foundation and Town Council.

Renata is a truthful and open-minded leader. She plays well with others and brings out the best in them to establish and achieve shared goals. Renata understands the functions of different governance structures that affect our community - the town, its school districts, the county, and the state. She knows "what is ours to do" as a town and how to engage representatives of the other jurisdictions to seek win-win solutions. She is committed to fiscally responsible and transparent governance, and exercised that commitment on state, local, business, and nonprofit boards and on the Town Council. Renata always does her homework. She has high aspirations for our town and is also a realist who works to craft consensus. She will work to preserve the town's strengths, which include its semi-rural character; and, to effectively address its needs, which include a more vibrant, varied, inclusive, and sustainable business climate. Please join us in voting for Renata on Nov. 3.

Sonja Schoenwald and Keller Strother
Moraga

Vote yes on Measure R

There seems to be some misunderstanding regarding Measure R on your ballot in the upcoming election; what it is and is not, what it does and does not do plus why we need it. Approving it will remove the existing « cent sales tax measure previously approved by the voters and replaces it with a 1 cent sales tax. It is neither a parcel tax nor a bond measure. When you make a taxable purchase in Orinda the tax you pay will increase by « cent. That does not seem like will generate much funding to use except that when you buy a "big ticket" item in another city [like a new car] the tax paid comes back Orinda for our use. The previous « sales tax increase generated about a million dollars plus per year and is how we had the funds to start fixing our public roads. Then two bond measures passed and repairs began in earnest.

The repair Plan/program is a success and by the end of this [2020] construction season will have taken the roads from "failed/poor" to "very good" with some "excellent". By this time next year all the bond money will have been spent doing what was promised; fixing roads and the shallow drains under them. Why do we need another tax even one as modest as R? During the review of the Plan two problems became apparent; first, there was no funding for maintenance of the work done and second, no funding to repair/replace the deep drains under the main roads [like Miner Road] add to these the need to fund for fire fuels mitigation to help prevent the kind disaster that has become too common in CA the last two years.

Measure R provides a stable source of funds [about \$3 million plus] to address all three of the above needs. We have made a significant investment [over \$53 million] in the infrastructure and quality of life of our City and now it is time to protect our investment. Vote yes on Measure R!

Terry Murphy
Orinda

Alternative to Measure R

Background: Eight years ago Orinda voters approved a General Sales Tax which the City can use for what it deems important. Measure R doubles that tax, and extends it 20 years, which ultimately would total \$60 million (including inflation). A July Staff report recommends spending between \$40,000 to \$60,000/month for Fire Prevention. Orinda currently has \$10 million (of which \$3 million is Unspent Sales Tax revenue) in reserves (of which a fraction could be used for Fire Prevention, until a March ballot measure for a \$150/year Parcel Tax for 5 years could be put in place).

Advantages of a 5-year Parcel Tax versus Doubling and Extending Sales Tax for 20 years: 1) A parcel tax would commit households to a total of \$750 for a 5-year period, compared to the total of \$9,000 (over 20 years- including inflation) that doubling and extending the sales tax would; 2) Most importantly, Measure R includes NO Requirement that any of taxes be spent on Fire Prevention, while the Parcel Tax would be dedicated Solely to Fire Prevention; 3) Parcel Tax would raise more money, and do so more quickly, to address Fire Prevention; and 4) Reduce the risk of future City Councils using additional sales tax receipts for other purpose(s) than being dedicated to Fire Prevention.

Conclusion: A parcel tax requires the extra effort of a 2/3's vote, rather than a simple majority. Orinda has consistently supported 2/3's tax initiatives. Examples being the Library Parcel Tax, the current sales tax, and the 2012 and 2016 Road Bonds. Voting No on R, and proceeding with a 5-year parcel tax initiative would raise more money, do it faster, and assure that the monies would be used solely for Fire Prevention.

Bill Cosden
Orinda

Cam for Council

I write in support of Cam Burks, who is running for the Lafayette City Council. Cam is the only incumbent amongst the four candidates seeking election. Cam has worked tirelessly on behalf of the city, and all residents. He is not afraid to make his opinion known, and he does not duck controversial issues. I admire his work ethic, his willingness to seek out the opinions of residents and his tenacity in representing us. I know many who have contributed to this community over the years who feel the same way. We very much admire that Cam is raising his family, holding down a demanding full-time job, and devoting much time to our city. We should all be so fortunate as to have him elected to another term, and he has my wholehearted support. Please join me in voting Cam Burks for another term on the city council.

Bill Fraser
Lafayette

No on R

The Measure R Sales Tax measure is placed on the ballot as a "general" tax; as such, it would need only a majority vote for approval. Despite the fact that the City Council therefore cannot legally say how the \$60 million that will be raised by this `general' sales tax over the next 20 years will be spent, at a recent candidate forum one City Council member actually stated that this revenue will in fact be `front-loaded' toward fire prevention/mitigation. This statement runs counter to the City's own `Needs Report' which showed the vast majority of the funds would be used other than for fire safety (which 'Needs Report' this candidate termed `misinformation' at the forum). The problem here is that not only has the City Counsel apparently changed its collective mind on use of funds but also that any statement making this changed plan publicly known will once again run counter to this tax being a "general tax."

The Measure R sales tax, which would double the sales tax rate and live on for 20 years, had been masquerading as a fire safety measure but all along has also been masquerading as a "general tax". I am hoping that the City Council, and all subsequent City Councils over the next 20 years, doesn't change its mind, once again, when what is needed right now (look out your window) is a true fire safety tax that all Orindans can count on in the future. What the City is asking for is a 20-year year blank check so it can decide that some other use of your money is more important.

I am voting NO on Measure R and am asking you to do the same.

It has been almost 30 years since the devastating Oakland/Berkeley Hills firestorm, and the City has spent virtually nothing on fire safety or fire preparedness.

The City does not need this new, doubled 20-year sales tax right now -- in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century with unknown economic repercussions -- especially since the City currently has a multi-million dollar fund on hand and our present sales tax, currently generating revenue, doesn't expire until March of 2023.

This is the wrong tax at the wrong time.

Vote NO on Measure R.

Bob Finch
Orinda

Jex and Jorgens and MOFD financials

As a Moraga resident, I have read with interest letters to the editor during this last month. Several of them mentioned the financial challenges MOFD is facing now and in the years ahead. I decided to examine for myself the financial statements and budgets available on the MOFD website. I verified what others have commented regarding the implications of MOFD being burdened by a huge long-term debt of almost \$50 million. This includes unfunded pension benefits and other employee benefits. There is also almost \$17 million of debt for pension obligation bonds and debt incurred for capital projects. The debt service for these obligations required a payment of \$4.3 million last year which is 17% of the property taxes received for the district last year.

Servicing these obligations and payments of salaries and other employee benefits limit what the district has left to spend on other community fire prevention projects. We need to pay attention to Directors Jex and Jorgens who have repeatedly addressed these issues during the last four years, and seem to be centering their platform during this election on the continual balance. Without their continued direction and focus on solving these issues, MOFD could run into serious financial problems.

Ken Shin
Moraga

Experience Matters, David Stromberg for Moraga Town Council

I strongly support David Stromberg for Moraga Town Council. In my time working with David on Moraga's Planning Commission, I have witnessed his fair minded and principled approach to decision making. Time and again, David's knowledge of Moraga's General Plan and Municipal Code have proved invaluable in helping the Commission navigate the challenging issues that have been brought before us.

At our recent Planning Commission meetings on the Moraga Center Specific Plan, David took an active role in communicating the concerns he has heard from Moraga's residents regarding safety, aesthetics, traffic congestion, urban open space and recreation opportunities. In doing so, David helped to lead the Commission to a framework for the Moraga Center that will ensure that when development does occur, it will be safe, smart, and reflective of Moraga's historic character.

With two seats on the Council being vacated and a third up for hopeful reelection, Moraga needs experienced leaders to help our Town navigate the difficult issues on the horizon. I know David has what it

takes to help move Moraga forward.

Please visit David's website, www.Stromberg2020.com, for more information on why David Stromberg is a leader Moraga needs on the Town Council.

Kerry Hillis

Planning Commissioner and Moraga Community Foundation Board Member

Anduri for Council

Seventeen years ago I attended a Lafayette city council meeting seeking a proclamation approving an effort by Lafayette residents to raise funds needed to build a school in Afghanistan that girls would attend. I was not seeking funds nor help from the city, simply the council's support. Some questioned why we should help people living in Afghanistan. The request was continued to another meeting. Several days later I asked the clerk to drop my request from the calendar. I certainly didn't need more stress in my life and frankly didn't care whether they approved or not. Upon learning it was being dropped, Carl Anduri called urging me to leave it on the calendar. He knew then what I didn't. The issue of whether we should care about the welfare of others wherever they live was worth debating. The motion passed four to one. Since then both Carl and his wife, Sharon, have, along with hundreds in Lamorinda, actively supported our work in Afghanistan. We need more compassionate and caring leaders willing to stand up for what's right. Carl proved then and over the years that he is one. He will have my vote.

Budd MacKenzie

Trust in Education, Lafayette

A vote for Farschad Farzan

One candidate truly shines for Lafayette City Council - Planning Commission Vice Chair Farschad Farzan. If you have had the pleasure to watch any of the candidate events (Chamber of Commerce, Inclusive Lafayette, Lafayette Homeowners Council), you will see that he is intelligent, compelling, and has outstanding ideas for our city. As a current Commissioner, Farschad is up to speed on all current projects, and will bring valuable planning expertise to Council. In light of the increasing number of lawsuits facing the city, his career as a practicing attorney and litigator is a strength we absolutely need.

What I like best about Farschad, after reading many reports from Planning Commission, is that he is willing to roll up his sleeves and thoroughly tackle the issues. I would be honored to work with Farschad on Council because he is an independent thinker who consistently shows he can work collaboratively with a positive attitude.

With so many big issues facing Lafayette, we need Councilmembers who don't back down from tough issues or legal threats, and Farschad is exactly that candidate. Please vote for Farschad Farzan for Lafayette City Council.

Susan Candell

Vice Mayor, City of Lafayette

Step up to fight climate change

I am writing to talk about the severity of climate change and the great effect it has taken on our lives already. While we are fortunate enough to not have fires here in Lamorinda, smoke is an issue that can't be ignored. I have been looking into the effects of smoke and the fires lately, and I came upon some very disturbing and interesting information. In an NPR podcast called "The Science of Wildfire smoke," NOAA research chemist Jessica Gilman states that smoke is made up of gasses and small particles called PM 2.5s. These small particles come from biomass such as burned up trees, tires, and brush. They are 2.5 micrometers or smaller (hence the name) and are therefore 50 times smaller than a grain of salt. These particles can travel easily through wind and, when inhaled, hit the back of the throat or deep into the lungs. Although small, these can cause serious lung problems. Smoke is most dangerous at night when the boundary layer- the atmospheric layer closest to the ground, condenses, pushing smoke down with it. This is even worse because fires produce the most smoke at night as they die down due to cooler temperatures and higher humidity levels. According to Gilman, as the smoke travels in the wind 80% of the US will see effects of the smoke. For the smoke to be removed from the atmosphere it must be rained out. Soot, caused by fires, emits radiation from the sun after it goes down- contributing to global warming. Pollutants cause more fires which cause more pollutants, creating a cycle of harm that has led to, and will lead to more hurricanes, rising temperatures, rising sea levels, extinction, and, you guessed it, fires. Let's drive less, recycle more, and most importantly, I implore you to elect leaders that care about this crisis, because it is not the far-away issue that we like to think it is. Our lives have already been affected by it, and it will only be worse for future generations unless we step up right now.

Molly Strohmeier

Lafayette

Anduri for City Council

I am writing to urge all Lafayette voters to cast a vote for Carl Anduri for the Lafayette City Council. Carl has the background, experience, and temperament we need.

I had the pleasure not only of serving ten years with Carl on the City Council from 2002 to 2012 but also serving four years with Carl on the Planning Commission. Carl listened and was always prepared, thoughtful, collegial and civil.

In addition to the Planning Commission and City Council, Carl gave his time to numerous committees, including the Hillside, Open Space, Environmental, Senior Housing, Park Theater and Roads task forces.

Despite choosing not to run for re-election in 2012 due to the demands of his legal career, he has continued to follow City issues and, as he is now retired, is eager to serve us on the Council again. We are fortunate to have a person of his caliber running. Vote for Carl Anduri for City Council!

Carol Federighi
Past Mayor, Lafayette

Onoda for Moraga Town Council

As long-time advocates for open space preservation, we urge Moragans to support Teresa Onoda for Town Council. No other resident has worked harder-and in so many capacities-to preserve Moraga's ridgelines, hillsides, wildlife and scenic beauty. As a Councilmember (2014-2018) Onoda supported tough new hillside/ridgeline regulations, helped defeat a massive housing project in Bollinger Canyon and opposed the Moraga Way City Ventures project that now blocks public views of a protected ridgeline.

As a Planning Commissioner in 2013, Onoda helped create Commons West Park, sparing that land from a developer's plan to bury it under eight feet of excess construction fill. Before that, she spent years helping organize the successful campaign to stop the Palos Colorado golf course, which ultimately saved 200 acres from the bulldozer and generated millions in developer fees for the Town.

Beyond her exceptional open-space record, Onoda has championed Moraga's youth programs, adopted gun-safety regulations, increased collaboration with Saint Mary's College and been the driving force behind Moraga's recent public art installations. We ask Moragans to embrace this opportunity to have Onoda back on the Council. She'll again dedicate herself to making Moraga the best it can be.

Dick Immel, Chair of the 1986 Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO) Initiative Committee
Suzanne Jones, Founder, Preserve Lamorinda Open Space

WHO IS PETT?????

I have no vested interest in Ms. Onoda's candidacy for Moraga's Town Council.

That said, I believe we all have a vested interest in political honesty and transparency, especially here in our local Moraga politics.

The sudden appearance of the "Oh No Not Onoda" roadside signs prompted me to find out more about the sponsoring organization and to better understand why they oppose her candidacy (beyond their "Move Forward, Not Back").

My research revealed nothing about this organization. To the best of my knowledge, "PETT-People for the Ethical Treatment of Taxpayers" simply does not exist, beyond the wording on their signs.

If there are valid reasons to question and/or challenge any candidate's suitability for office, the opposing organization has the obligation to provide voters with information to help them make better, educated decisions. To borrow from the vernacular, these signs are nothing more than a shot from the grassy knoll. Having lived in Moraga for nearly 50 years, all I can say is that we're better than this and I find PETT's actions to be unseemly and dishonest.

Paul Cohune
Moraga

NO to R now, YES to a Redo

I do not normally oppose what appear to be progressive taxation, but in this case I have to. Measure R is a poorly structured 20 year tax increase that is in serious need of revision. As the East Bay Times, and the San Francisco Chronicle point out, measure R is very poorly designed and they recommend a NO vote. So do I.

Voting NO on R does not stop the city or Orinda from resubmitting a well-designed measure in 2022 with effective input from the entire Orinda community. The city has a sufficient revenue stream with the tax already in place that expires in 2023 providing sufficient funds for the current road and drainage plans. For the immediate and important needs of fire mitigation, part of the \$11,000,000 reserve grown over the past four years can be used today - now!

A Redo of R is Orinda's best plan for addressing the needs of fire mitigation along with a unified program for all of Orinda's infrastructure needs in drainage and roads. R needs a plan. I am certain that the citizens of Orinda can work with the city council and staff to develop a specific and sensible one. Then we can all be on board to a YES on the revised R.

Bill Abriel
Orinda resident 20 years

Supporting Teresa Onoda for Town Council

As a born and raised Moragan, a small business owner, and now a husband and father-of-two Moraga resident, I feel attuned to the values of our community. Unbeknownst to me while growing up here, many of these values have been championed by Teresa Onoda herself. Once upon a time, she was even a chaperone to my older brother's miners' camp field trip when he was a student at in elementary school.

Many of these values upheld by Teresa as priorities, highlight respect and responsibility. Respect to our residents, responsibility to the environment and (of greater impact to myself) responsibility to our local businesses. She recognizes how relationships are two-way, and how we must take care of the things that are important to us. She puts forth the effort to connect with people; and she draws on her expertise as a professional artist to provide leadership in maintaining the aesthetic of Moraga, especially its natural beauty. Teresa, as a longstanding member of our community, will always put her best foot forward when it comes to protecting our Moraga way of life. Learn about her more for yourself at <https://teresaformoraga.com/>
Evan Lowe

Moraga

No more negative signs

Signs placed along our Moraga public streets during a Council election campaign expressing "No" on a candidate have absolutely no legitimate place in our Town. The latest example is the signs expressing opposition to Teresa Onoda. This ugly kind of behavior is the mark of persons who place greater value in denigrating a candidate rather than in putting themselves publicly on the line in support of another candidate. To all Moraga voters who find this behavior as abhorrent as I do, please help me to end this practice by showing resoundingly on November 3 that it doesn't work.

Colleen Lund

53 year Moraga resident

Anduri for City Council

Vision, Integrity, Reason, Calm, Civility, Collaboration. these are the attributes Carl Anduri will bring to the Council. As we've seen in his past service, Carl will be a voice for all Lafayette. every neighborhood's concerns, listening openly to all perspectives. Carl's ability to approach complex issues with balance, an open mind and fiscal integrity has been proven by his long history of civic leadership. His extensive career as an attorney will help ground Council decisions on a fact-based, sustainable footing. His legal expertise will be invaluable when navigating complicated legislative initiatives in the Sacramento pipeline. I can't recall a time, in all my years in Lafayette, when the need for grace, quiet intelligence, historical perspective combined with innovative thinking has been more essential. Times are changing, communities are transforming and changing to meet these times, the diversity of the population is, and should be, changing. Lafayette needs Carl's voice at the table, and for this reason I am proud to endorse his candidacy.

Kathy Merchant

Lafayette resident for 36 years

Save Lafayette from "Save Lafayette"

On September 23, 2020, Save Lafayette filed a lawsuit against the city of Lafayette over its approval of the Terraces proposal. The lawsuit will almost certainly fail-nearly every argument made in the lawsuit has been repeatedly refuted by city staff-but it encapsulates Save Lafayette's pattern of promoting easily refutable falsehoods based on wishful thinking.

Save Lafayette rose to prominence by forcing the city to vote on Measure L, the 2018 ballot measure for a smaller proposal featuring 44 single-family homes at the Deer Hill site, and then campaigning against it. The city and the developer had negotiated this proposal as a compromise with clear terms: if the 44-unit project was not approved, then the original 315-unit proposal would return. New state laws would make it very difficult to legally deny.

Save Lafayette dismissed this argument as a "vague threat" and asserted that the city could force a referendum vote or deny the Terraces project based on its 2013 environmental review findings. Residents voted against Measure L and, as promised, the developer resumed the process of getting the 315-unit Terraces of Lafayette proposal approved.

Almost immediately, Save Lafayette began spreading new misinformation and questionable legal interpretations. Most blatantly, they claim that Lafayette has built enough affordable housing to satisfy state mandates-we undeniably have not. More subtly, they twist the words of state laws like CEQA and the Housing Accountability Act beyond recognition from the actual written text of those bills. They've conspiratorially accused Lafayette's city staff, independent consultants, and regional first responders of presenting "one-sided advocacy in favor of the project." Of course, Save Lafayette is itself an advocacy group that exists primarily to oppose development at the Deer Hill site.

The Housing Accountability Act is clear: to deny the proposal, Lafayette needed to show that the Terraces would create an unmitigable, specific, quantifiable impact upon the public health and safety, based on a preponderance of objective evidence. Four out of five council members agreed that this threshold could not be met and voted to approve the project.

Save Lafayette's stubborn crusade against any development on the Deer Hill site backfired spectacularly-had they simply listened to the same staff and councilmembers that they ironically accuse of misunderstanding the law and betraying residents' best interests, the Homes at Deer Hill would likely be under construction today. Instead, the group's refusal to compromise or impartially engage with state laws they don't like has paved the way for a development seven times larger.

Going forward, we must approach housing development in Lafayette with a shared understanding of legal reality and a willingness to compromise. We cannot ignore state laws or mislead ourselves about what they mean, even if we disagree with them. We must build responsibly, but we cannot reflexively attack evidence that doesn't match our biases. We gain nothing from undermining our public officials and questioning their credibility. Save Lafayette's conspiratorial accusations, self-defeating confirmation bias, and frivolous, expensive lawsuits will only hurt Lafayette, not save us.

Jeremy Levine

Chris Mickas

Inclusive Lafayette

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[back](#)

